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INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-10	ACDE-00	AID-00	ARA-01	A-00	CA-02
	CCO-00	CG-00	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00	OASY-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-01	FAAE-00
	FBIE-00	UTED-00	IMMC-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00	JUSE-00
	LAB-01	L-01	MCO-01	ADS-00	MMP-00	M-00	NRCE-00
	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-03	OIS-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
	P-00	SSO-00	SS-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01
	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-09	G-00	/032W		

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4102

INFO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

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AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM//SCCC//

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 007029

DEPARTMENT FOR S/CT-REAP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PTER, AR

SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: 1996 ANNUAL TERRORISM REPORT

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON  
 DATE/CASE ID: 26 NOV 2008 200705645

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1. POST RESPONSES ARE KEYED TO PARA 3 IN REFTEL.

A) ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES INVESTIGATED AS A DOMESTIC TERRORIST INCIDENT THE SHOOTING ON 04 APRIL 1996 OF A FORMER POLICE DOCTOR WHO ASSISTED IN THE TORTURE OF ILLEGALLY DETAINED PERSONS DURING THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP BETWEEN 1976 AND 1983. A SHADY GROUP CALLED THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION (ORP) CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SHOOTING AND THREATENED A WAVE OF SIMILAR "REPRISALS" AGAINST INDIVIDUALS ALLEGED TO HAVE ASSISTED IN THE DIRTY WAR. MEMBERS OF ORP GAVE CLANDESTINE INTERVIEWS TO JOURNALISTS IN NEIGHBORING URUGUAY, BOASTING THAT THEY HAD EXTENSIVE MEMBERSHIP AND REVEALING LOCATIONS IN ARGENTINA WHERE THEY HAD CONDUCTED TERRORIST TRAINING EXERCISES. ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES BELIEVE THE GROUP HAS LIMITED MEANS TO CARRY OUT TERRORIST ACTIVITIES AND MAY HAVE LINKS WITH CORRUPT POLICE OFFICERS FROM THE PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES.

B) INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST ENRIQUE GORRIARAN MERLO, WHO WAS DEPORTED AND RELEASED TO ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES FROM MEXICO IN OCTOBER 1995, AND WHO HAS CLAIMED PUBLICLY THAT HE ASSASSINATED FORMER NICARAGUAN PRESIDENT ANASTASIO SAMOZA, DURING 1996 WAS PROSECUTED SUCCESSFULLY IN ARGENTINA FOR HIS PARTICIPATION IN AN ARMED ATTACK ON A MILITARY INSTALLATION IN 1989. GORRIARAN MERLO'S LEGAL APPEALS FOR A NEW TRIAL HAVE SO FAR BEEN REJECTED BY THE ARGENTINE COURTS.

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C) THE ARGENTINE CONGRESS CONTINUES TO EXAMINE IMPROVEMENTS TO DOMESTIC LAW WHICH COULD FACILITATE ANTI-TERRORIST INVESTIGATIONS. AT LEAST ONE ANTI-TERRORISM BILL HAS PASSED OUT OF COMMITTEE AND COULD BE TAKEN UP BY THE LOWER HOUSE (CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES) AT ANY TIME. THE ARGENTINE JUDICIARY IS CURRENTLY DEBATING THE BEST WAY FOR ARGENTINA TO INCORPORATE THE USE UNDERCOVER AGENTS AND PLEA BARGAINING IN TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS, BUT ARGENTINA'S HISTORY OF ABUSES OF POLICE POWERS HAS

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PREVENTED MORE RAPID PROGRESS.

D) ARGENTINE PRESIDENT CARLOS MENEM ISSUED A STATEMENT DEPLORING THE BOMBING THAT OCCURRED AT THE ATLANTA SUMMER OLYMPIC PARK AND HAS MADE SIMILAR STATEMENTS CONCERNING WORLD-WIDE TERRORIST INCIDENTS. MENEM, A DESCENDENT OF SYRIAN EMIGRES, HAS REPEATEDLY OFFERED TO ACT AS AN INTERMEDIARY IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS IN AN EFFORT TO AVOID FURTHER TERRORIST VIOLENCE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ITS ARAB NEIGHBORS.

E) ARGENTINE INTERIOR MINISTER CARLOS CORACH, WHO HAS OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COUNTER-TERRORISM ISSUES AND CIVILIAN SECURITY SERVICES IN ARGENTINA, ATTENDED THE 1996 HEMISPERIC MEETING ON TERRORISM IN LIMA, PART OF THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS FOLLOW UP AND ACTION PLAN. IN ADDITION, CORACH HAS NEGOTIATED AND SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED BILATERAL ANTI-TERRORISM AGREEMENTS WITH RUSSIA, TUNISIA, ISRAEL, AND OTHER COUNTRIES. CORACH ALSO BROKERED TWO AGREEMENTS IN 1996 AMONG ARGENTINA, PARAGUAY, AND BRAZIL THAT IN PART AIM TO COUNTER THE

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TERRORIST THREAT IN THE SO-CALLED TRI-BORDER ZONE, WHERE THE FRONTIERS OF THE THREE COUNTRIES MEET. HE HAS ALSO OVERSEEN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DISTRIBUTION IN 1996 OF TAMPER-PROOF ARGENTINE PASSPORTS AND SOON TO BE RELEASED NEW NATIONAL IDENTITY CARDS, BOTH STEPS TOWARD PREVENTING THE USE OF FALSE IDENTITY DOCUMENTS BY TERRORISTS.

F) NONE

G) NO

H) THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT APPEARS COMMITTED TO PREVENTING ANY ADDITIONAL TERRORIST ATTACKS AND HAS NOT CHANGED ITS LEVEL OF EFFORT TO SOLVE THE 1994 BOMBING OF THE JEWISH CULTURAL CENTER (AMIA). THE INVESTIGATING JUDGE IN THAT CASE IN 1996 ORDERED THE ARREST OF SEVERAL SENIOR PROVINCIAL POLICEMEN WHO WERE SHOWN TO HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF THE STOLEN AND ALTERED

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VAN USED IN THE BOMBING, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE NOT BEEN CHARGED DIRECTLY WITH COMPLICITY IN THE ATTACK ITSELF. DURING 1996, THE ARGENTINE SUPREME COURT, WHICH HAS INVESTIGATIVE JURISDICTION OVER THE CASE OF THE 1992 BOMBING OF THE ISRAELI EMBASSY, DECIDED THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE COURT WOULD SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE

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AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 007029

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INVESTIGATION. THE COURT SPONSORED A REPORT BY A GROUP OF CIVIL ENGINEERS DESCRIBING THE POSSIBLE CAUSES OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE EMBASSY BUILDING; THE ENGINEERS DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A BLAST OCCURRING FROM WITHIN THE BUILDING'S STRUCTURE, DESPITE ALL ACCUMULATED EVIDENCE THAT THE BOMBING WAS PERPETRATED BY DRIVING A CAR BOMB UP TO THE STRUCTURE. THE REPORT WAS IMMEDIATELY CONDEMNED BY ARGENTINE JEWISH GROUPS AND THE CURRENT ISRAELI AMBASSADOR, AND THE COURT NEVER RELEASED THE REPORT TO THE PUBLIC.

I) ARGENTINA HAS BEEN ONE THE BIGGEST RECIPIENTS OF USG TRAINING IN ANTI-TERRORISM TECHNIQUES. MORE THAN USD 4 MILLION HAS BEEN EXPENDED ON TRAINING FOR ARGENTINE SECURITY FORCES TO DATE THROUGH THE ANTI-TERRORISM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ATAP). COURSE OFFERINGS HAVE INCLUDED AMONG OTHERS: POST-BLAST INVESTIGATIONS, EXPLOSIVE INCIDENT COUNTERMEASURES, VIP PROTECTION, BORDER SECURITY, AN INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE SEMINAR, AND A BOMB DETECTION DOG (K-9) AND HANDLER PROGRAM. THIS LATTERMOST INITIATIVE PROVIDED THE ARGENTINE FEDERAL POLICE WITH A SELF-SUFFICIENT EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DETECTION (EOD) K-9 RESOURCE, HERETOFORE NON-EXISTENT IN ARGENTINA. ATAP EQUIPMENT GRANTS HAVE ALSO BEEN PROVIDED TO THE GOA, TO INCLUDE A STATE-OF-THE-ART AIRPORT X-RAY SYSTEM FOR INSPECTION OF HOLD LUGGAGE, A TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED EOD ROBOT, AND THE AFOREMENTIONED EOD DOGS. IN ADDITION, A COMBINED DS/ATA, FBI, AND S/CT TEAM VISITED ARGENTINA IN MARCH 1996 TO

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CAPABILITIES IN ANTI-TERRORISM.

J)    NONE ON RECORD.

K)    NONE ON RECORD.

END RESPONSES.

2. POST UNDERSTANDS A SPANISH-LANGUAGE VERSION OF GLOBAL PATTERNS MAY BE PRODUCED IN THE FUTURE. EMBASSY underscoreS THE NEED FOR SUCH A PUBLICATION AS IT WOULD GREATLY EXPAND THE INTEREST IN AND USEFULNESS OF THE ANNUAL REPORT, ESPECIALLY AT THE WORKING LEVEL IN ARGENTINE MINISTRIES WHICH COLLABORATE WITH POST ON ANTI-TERRORISM ISSUES. CHEEK

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